



Foreign Affairs Manual Circular

JOINT STATE, AID, USIA, CIRCULAR

SUBJECT: Uniform Local Rules and Practices

No. 163

January 6, 1964

1. Background

- a. Uniformity in the treatment of overseas personnel and in overseas administrative practices is a major goal of the Department of State, including the Agency for International Development (AID), and the United States Information Agency (USIA). Differences in treatment of overseas personnel lead to serious morale problems; differences in administrative practices create added burdens on administrative staffs which service more than one agency.
- b. The problems arising in the field from lack of uniformity in our overseas administrative regulations have been a matter of deep concern to Washington and field staffs for some time. In response to this need and to the President's over-all policy for achievement of greater coordination of the total United States foreign activities, the three agencies established a Task Force in July 1962 to develop a program for achieving uniformity in overseas administrative regulations wherever possible. The progress to date has demonstrated that this is a realistic and possible objective. The senior administrative officers of the three agencies have agreed to give this work added impetus and higher priority and have directed their staffs accordingly.
- c. While the issuance of uniform regulations by Washington will eliminate obstacles, the responsibility for the actual achievement of uniformity rests largely with the field. Most regulations require implementation by local rules and practices and there are many areas subject to local control which are not covered by Washington regulations. Where uniform regulations are issued by Washington, they will normally spell out any areas requiring local implementation. Even where regulations are not entirely uniform, a large measure of uniformity can be achieved locally and in many cases this has already been accomplished.

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2. Issuance of Uniform Local Rules and Practices

- a. The President's letter of May 29, 1961 places on the ambassador the responsibility "to oversee and coordinate all the activities of the United States Government" in his country of assignment and grants special responsibility and authority in regard to the proper conduct of United States Government employees. In order to achieve the maximum degree of uniformity and in accordance with the President's letter of May 29, 1961, the ambassador, after consultation with heads of other agency missions, and subject to law and to the policies and regulations prescribed by each agency's headquarters in Washington, shall exercise his authority to issue uniform rules and adopt uniform practices governing administrative matters of the three agencies within his country of assignment.
- b. This authority is designed to implement more fully the President's letter and the contents of this circular are not to be construed as circumscribing or limiting the authorities granted the ambassador in the letter or by law, Executive Order, or regulation.

3. Policies

- a. The achievement of greater uniformity necessitates give-and-take between the several agencies and depends upon a willingness to understand each other's problems. However, full recognition must be given to the essentials for carrying out each agency's responsibilities as well as complying with the differing legislative, policy and regulatory restrictions under which they must operate.
- b. The ambassador is responsible for providing leadership in this endeavor as part of his broad responsibilities as the principal representative of the United States Government in the country. The full and active participation by the heads of USIA and AID establishments and by other agencies in the country is vital to success. While the ambassador must exercise leadership, this is not a project to impose the Embassy's or Department of State's administrative policies, regulations or practices on the other agencies. Rather, each agency's administrative concerns must be given full recognition.
- c. In drafting regulations or procedures applicable to the entire country, provisions should be included, when appropriate, to meet differences peculiar to local areas of the country and to unique differences in programs.

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- d. State, AID and USIA have agreed that, as a matter of principle, the standards of benefits applying to individuals of one agency will not be reduced in order to achieve uniformity with agencies whose personnel receive lesser benefits. Rather, every attempt will be made to raise all agencies to the higher level. There will, of course, be exceptions to this principle if an agency feels that certain of the benefits enjoyed by personnel of another agency are unwarranted for its own. In such instances, appropriate restrictions or limitations should be specified.

4. Program for Field Action

- a. At many posts, particularly those with small AID or USIS staffs, lack of uniformity has not been a great problem. Furthermore, most posts have already taken action to overcome many of the problems with which they have been faced. However, at posts which still have morale or administrative problems arising from differences in local rules and practices, a positive program of local action is needed. The program requires two actions: first, establish a means for consultation and collaboration to assure that administrative procedures and practices adopted in the future embody the maximum degree of uniformity consistent with the separate responsibilities of the agencies at the post; and second, review and revise existing instructions with the same objective.
- b. To achieve uniformity in future instructions affecting two or more agencies, administrative personnel must consult and collaborate with their opposite numbers in the other agencies during the formulation stage of new proposals. The ambassador should designate a senior officer to take the leadership, in consultation with appropriate officers of other agencies, to identify and resolve differences in existing instructions.
- c. In drafting uniform instructions, it may prove necessary to incorporate special provisions or exceptions for one or more of the agencies. Such exceptions should be included in the uniform rules, rather than as one agency's amendment or supplement to the basic instruction. Uniform administrative rules should be published as a separate Embassy series. Where necessary, they may be reproduced for inclusion in each agency's local issuance systems.

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5. The Funding Problem

- a. Although some uniform regulations will be established by Washington and supplemented by uniform instructions in the field, temporary shortages of funds, equipment, buildings and other facilities may prevent one or more agencies from immediate implementation to the fullest extent.
- b. Each agency at the post must seek to solve the financial problems which are obstacles to uniformity, seeking Washington assistance where appropriate. In developing field instructions, temporary shortages of funds should not preclude agreement in principle. Where the shortage appears to be of long duration, special exemptions for particular agencies may be needed.

6. Reporting Instructions

Each ambassador is requested to report on action taken in accordance with this instruction. The report should be submitted as a Joint State/AID/USIA airgram, subject: REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES - Uniform Regulations, and should be transmitted not later than August 1, 1964. The report should cover:

- (a) The instructions which have been issued by the ambassador and heads of other agency missions;
- (b) The administrative action taken to ensure interagency consultation;
- (c) The areas where uniformity is being worked on, with a statement to progress made, and a schedule for areas for future attention;
- (d) Any problems or other comments;
- (e) In countries where there is no need for local action, a negative report is requested;
- (f) An analysis of local problems which are created by differences in regulations and procedures issued by Washington. This analysis should cite the pertinent provisions of the regulations of each agency and should describe the problems in terms of the specific adverse effects upon post personnel or operations.

(RP)

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